"Waiting for Christ at Christmas"
Luke 2:21-38

"Second only to suffering, waiting may be the greatest teacher and trainer in godliness, maturity, and genuine spirituality most of us ever encounter." Richard Hendrix'

Principle: The ability to wait is a test of maturity.

"Waiting is our destiny. As creatures who cannot by themselves bring about what they hope for, we wait in the darkness for a flame we cannot light. We wait in fear for a happy ending that we cannot write. We wait for a 'not yet' that feels like a 'not ever.'" Lewis Smedes

Principle: Waiting on the Lord is an act of obedience.

"Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him." Psalms 37:7

43 times in the Old Testament the people are commanded – "Wait on the Lord."

Simeon means to "hear and obey."

Anna means "grace".

Principle: What God does in us while we wait is as important as what it is we're waiting for."

Principle: Waiting is part of the process of becoming what God wants us to be.

What Biblical waiting is not: Biblical waiting is not passive waiting around for something or someone to come along that will allow you to escape from your trouble.

What Biblical waiting is: Biblical waiting is a confident, disciplined, expectant, active, sometimes painful clinging to God.

"Asking God to give us our daily bread should not encourage us to stand around waiting for it to fall from heaven." John Wesley

Principle: We don't wait well. We're into microwaving; God, on the other hand, is usually into marinating."

Principle: Waiting on the Lord requires a trusting heart.

Three requirements to waiting on the Lord:

1. Waiting on the Lord requires patient trust.

"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments and His paths beyond tracing out! Who ahs known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things." Romans 11:33ff.

2. Waiting on the Lord requires confident humility.

   "The fruit or righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever." Isaiah 32:17

   Principle: The single most important activity for people waiting on God is prayer.

   Principle: Prayer allows us to wait without worry.

   What causes hope to disappear?

   1. We trust in the wrong things.
   2. We forget that God is bigger than the hurts, disappointments, and problems we face.
   3. We focus on this life and not eternal life.
   4. We forget that God is at work within us.

   We can learn to hope when:

   1. We realize that God is watching over us.
   2. We believe that God is in control of our circumstances
   3. We understand that God wants to be intimately involved in our lives
   4. We realize that God has a plan for us
   5. We understand that God is our source of hope
   6. We believe in the resurrection of Christ
   7. We understand that God is at work in our situation

3. Waiting on the Lord requires that we recognize God's voice.

   Principle: God's voice is never frantic.

   How should I listen to God?

   1. Be still before Him
   2. Invite Him to speak to you
   3. Expect Him to speak to you
   4. Obey what God says to you

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not grow weary. They shall walk and not faint." Isaiah 40:30, 31

Principle: Sometimes walking is all we can do. But in those times, walking is <u>enough</u>.

"God, grant me to be silent before you – that I may hear you; at rest in you – that you may work in me; open to you – that you may enter; empty before you – that you may fill me. Let me be still and know you are my God. Amen."